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HIROHITO'S DENIAL OF DIVINITY REVEALS FERMENT IN JAPAN

IT has become evident from recent developments that, within five months of its defeat by the Allied powers, Imperial Japan is in a state of political ferment far exceeding that to be found in Germany after a longer period of occupation. Although there is no reason for complacency concerning Japan's evolution as a peaceful state, the Emperor's New Year's rescript informing the Japanese people that his claims to divinity are, after all, "legends and myths" reflects the growing popular disquiet within the country, as well as the pressure of American occupation policy on the Japanese state. Something of the character of this policy has been revealed anew by General MacArthur's report on American activities in Japan and Korea during September and October, as released by the War Department on January 2, and especially by his directives of January 4, ordering the Japanese government to abolish twenty-seven militaristic societies and to remove from office and bar from the forthcoming general elections various categories of "active exponents" of militaristic nationalism.

HAS HIROHITO BECOME A LIBERAL? The Imperial rescript, abandoning "the false conception that the Emperor is divine and that the Japanese people are superior to other races and fated to rule the world," undermines more effectively than anything we could say the myths that have been used to drive the Japanese people to war. But this statement, however welcome, does not in itself destroy the basis for a future revival of militarism, nor is it a proof of liberalism and democratic views on the part of the Emperor. Many nations have engaged in aggressive warfare, although not regarding their rulers as divine; and the Japanese, should they again have an opportunity for aggression, may seize it even if in the meantime they have adopted a more modern and rational political organization than in

the past. What the Emperor has done is to renounce the philosophy of Japanese militarism as hitherto constituted, in the hope of retaining his supreme position in Japanese life under another form.

The Emperor's move was shrewd and far-seeing, involving a strikingly rapid adjustment to political necessity. On December 15 General MacArthur had ordered the removal of all state support for the nationalistic Shinto religion, which had been artificially encouraged by the Japanese government as part of its plans for aggression on the Asiatic mainland and in the Pacific. Since this directive made it probable that in the months ahead the foundations of divine rule would be weakened, the prospect arose that the Emperor might even find it necessary to abdicate. In recent weeks, also, the cabinet of Premier Kijuro Shidehara has been under increasing fire from the Japanese press and other agencies of public opinion because of its failure to tackle energetically the serious problems of food, fuel and shelter. This, too, has represented a threat to the Imperial position, for under current conditions an unpopular cabinet inevitably reflects on the Emperor—as well as on the American authorities.

MOTIVES FOR THE RESCRIPT. It is in the light of these circumstances that the content of the Imperial rescript should be judged. The statement begins with a reiteration of the Charter Oath issued in 1868 by the Emperor Meiji—apparently in an effort to suggest that Hirohito, like his grandfather, intends to strike out boldly along new lines. Although the language of Meiji's Charter Oath refers vaguely and reassuringly to the government's acting in accordance with public opinion, it is noteworthy that its third clause—quoted in full by Hirohito along with the rest of the document—reads as follows: "All common people, no less than the civil and military officials, shall be allowed to fulfill their just

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desires so that there may not be any discontent among them." This is a startling clause to reaffirm at present, for the Emperor must know that, under occupation policy, Japan is not to have any "military officials" and the problem of allowing them to "fulfill their just desires" therefore cannot arise.

Perhaps the motivation behind the entire statement is to be found in these words: "We feel deeply concerned to note that consequent upon the protracted war ending in our defeat our people are liable to grow restless and to fall into the slough of despond. Radical tendencies in excess are gradually spreading and the sense of morality tends to lose its hold on the people with the result that there are signs of confusion of thoughts." This section, taken in conjunction with the renunciation of divinity, suggests that the purpose of the rescript is to reduce the "restlessness" among the people and to encourage the belief in America and Japan that the Emperor is capable of leading a progressive Japanese state.

The immediate effect of the rescript is a wholesome one, especially since it has been followed so closely by General MacArthur's directive against office-holding by militaristic individuals—an order which has thrown the Japanese cabinet into a state of crisis and has seriously weakened the ultra-conservative elements that dominate the government. This is especially true with regard to the Diet elections which were planned for January 24, but are now to be postponed. Under the new directive the reactionary and misnamed Progressive party, which had hoped to sweep the balloting, will face grave difficulties, since so many of its high figures are barred from office as a result of their past militaristic activities.

WHEN TO HOLD ELECTIONS. The fact that elections are being postponed offers an opportunity to consider whether voting for the Diet is desirable in Japan in the near future. The holding of early elections in a defeated enemy country, like Japan or Germany, should not be viewed as an obligation on

the occupying authorities, but rather as a matter of tactics. Whether the first national balloting is to take place in March, August or December ought to depend on the strength that anti-militaristic groups are likely to show at any particular time. Since Japan's surrender there has been an encouraging growth of such groups, but they are still small and weak in relation to parties primarily representing aspects of Japanese life outmoded by defeat. It would clearly be undesirable to allow Japan's fledgling anti-militarists to be forced into competition on a national scale with the camouflaged warhawks of the old order so soon after Japan's defeat. Much better results might be achieved if Diet elections were postponed for six months or a year to permit the forward-looking elements in Japan to develop more strength. At the same time, the holding of contests on a local or prefectural basis might have useful educational effects and also give the makers of policy some means of judging when the time will be ripe for Diet elections.

It is clear that, under American occupation, there has been a healthy growth of a new type of popular opinion in Japan. But it would be unwise to jump to the conclusion that Japan's future development has been settled and will present no serious problems. The most fundamental issues of Japanese agriculture, labor and industry, although discussed in American directives, have barely been touched upon in practice. Genuine change in Japanese society will inevitably take a long time, and the enunciation of policy plans should not be confused with their actual execution. Moreover, as General MacArthur's report on his administration indicates, the economic problems facing Japan are extremely serious. If Americans were to think of Japan solely in political terms, we would be in danger of overlooking the crucial effect that food, housing, fuel, land and wage policies will have on the political development of the defeated enemy in Asia.

LAWRENCE K. ROSINGER

WILL PALESTINE INQUIRY OFFER NEW HOPE TO EUROPEAN JEWRY?

On January 2 General Sir Frederick E. Morgan, director of UNRRA's aid to displaced persons in Germany, declared that Polish Jews—many of whom, he claimed, were well fed, well clothed and supplied with plenty of money—were streaming into the American zone in a "well organized, positive plan to get out of Europe," and this movement, in his opinion, was closely linked with the problem of Palestine. While it was soon clear that Sir Frederick's remarks had been misinterpreted by the press, his statement raised a storm of protest, especially among Zionist groups. UNRRA summarily dismissed him, but by January 7 his status was still unclear.

The Morgan interview has also touched off discussions beyond the work of UNRRA. For it highlights

the inquiry to be undertaken by the joint Anglo-American Commission on Palestine, created on November 13, and charged with making recommendations about the future of European Jewry as well as Palestine. Its first hearings opened in Washington on January 7. The personnel of the new group, announced on December 10, includes Judge Joseph C. Hutcheson, of Texas, who will act as the alternate chairman with Sir John E. Singleton, Judge of the High Court of Justice in London. Among the American members of the Commission, Mr. James G. McDonald, former Chairman of the Foreign Policy Association, is perhaps the best known in this field because of his work as High Commissioner for Refugees under the League of Nations and as Chairman

of the President's Advisory Committee on Political Refugees.

FATE OF EUROPE'S JEWRY. By a tragic paradox the problem of Europe's Jewry has been growing more rather than less acute since the end of the war. By now it is clearly established that of Europe's former six or seven million Jews, only about one and a half or two million remain alive. Opinion is divided, however, concerning the fate of the Jews who survived the Nazi terror of the last decade or more. There are other statements, similar to that of General Morgan, on record indicating that the reports of outbreaks against Jews in Poland are exaggerated. Yet the bulk of evidence since V-E Day shows that many Jews have suffered anew from anti-Semitic attacks as well as from the general chaos that has come in the wake of war. The proportions of the new anti-Semitic attacks, however, have never been accurately gauged, and hence never accurately presented to the American public.

Violence toward Jewish populations has been reported in recent months not only from Poland, but even from Czechoslovakia and France. The earlier statement prepared by Earl G. Harrison, former United States Commissioner of Immigration, on which President Truman based his plea of August 31 to Prime Minister Attlee for opening Palestine to 100,000 additional European Jews, told part of the story of maltreatment within Germany. At the same time it must be borne in mind that the influx of displaced persons from areas of Germany occupied by Poland and Russia, as well as from Czechoslovakia, has created extremely grave problems for Britain and the United States. Whether all the Jews left in Europe wish to find refuge abroad or in Palestine, however, remains an open question. Difficult as it will be to ascertain, the long over-due answer to this question may be provided by the new Anglo-American Commission.

NEW COMMISSION ON PALESTINE. The present urgent concern about General Morgan's remarks is wholly understandable in view of the long years in which little was attempted and nothing was done either about the plight of Hitler's first victims or about Palestine. Commissions of inquiry have often been superimposed one on another; yet the present Commission has one advantage over its predecessors. While the United States and Britain have worked together before in search of answers to the problem of finding refuge for Jews driven from Europe, never have these two powers associated themselves officially in such an auspicious effort to

study Europe's Jewry in its relation to Palestine.

What is surprising, in view of America's direct official participation in the present effort to solve the long-standing Palestinian question, is the lack of support the Commission has received from some organized Zionist groups. Charging that the new body is just another study group, they have protested that the United States has been led astray by Britain in accepting Attlee's invitation for a joint investigation. The new Commission may, however, prove to be a fresh start toward adjusting the Palestine problem. Such a start was imperative, for in Palestine as well as in Europe the fate of Jewry hangs in the balance. During the past year sporadic violence has persisted in the mandated territory. Most evidence now points toward increasing disturbances, for certain of the extremist Zionist groups in Palestine are especially aroused by the new Commission's efforts.

EFFECTIVE PROPOSALS NEEDED. Although the fresh attempt to settle the Palestine issue is welcome, its recommendations will mean little, even if progressive and reasonable, until they are implemented. In view of its wide powers of recommendation, it may be hoped the Commission will even suggest that quotas be raised to care for refugees who find it necessary to emigrate to British territories or the United States. This proposal is often derided by those most seriously concerned with solving the refugee problem. Yet it would relieve Britain and the United States—now that the latter is also directly involved in proposing solutions about Palestine—of the charge of hypocrisy. For Arabs oppose further immigration of Jews to Palestine as long as other states refuse to welcome them.

A guarantee from the United States as well as Britain that a new status for Palestine will be established and upheld remains the crucial test of the new Commission's courage and foresight. The Commission's recommendations, to be useful, must be far-reaching, but if they are broad in scope they will require considerable change in United States policy in the Near East. For this reason there is little room for special pleading that does not recognize that many conflicting interests besides those of Jews and Arabs center in Palestine. The new Commission will perform a valuable service if it provides a body of factual information and plans on which the public may base its conclusions about the needs of European Jewry and about plans for Palestine which both Britain and the United States can and will fulfill.

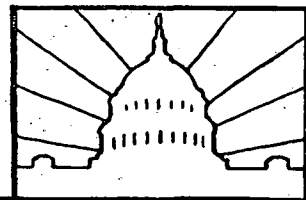
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Washington News Letter



WASHINGTON HOPEFUL ON OUTLOOK FOR PEACE IN CHINA

The success of the UNO in keeping the peace of the world will depend partly on whether China's rival political factions can compose their differences and unite their country. China is a region where long-standing internal weakness has tempted strong foreign governments to seek special preferment, thus inspiring strife and rivalry outside as well as inside the country. To allay international rivalry, the United States three times in 50 years has suggested moves to equalize the interests of all in China—first, through the doctrine of the Open Door (1899); second, through the Nine-Power Treaty (1922); and third, through the December 27 communiqué issued by the United States, Russia and Britain after the Moscow Conference, which recorded their joint wish for Chinese unification. The delegations which convene in London on January 10 for the first meeting of the General Assembly of UNO will therefore have a deep interest in the formal conversations that began in Chungking on January 7, as a result of President Truman's announcement of December 15 and the Moscow communiqué.

UNITY PROSPECTS IMPROVE. The prospects for domestic peace and unity are considered here better than at any time since Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek first broke with the Chinese Communists in 1927. The January 7 conference has brought together representatives of the two groups that are fighting a desultory civil war in China—the National government and the Communists—with General George C. Marshall, special envoy of President Truman. General Chang Chun, provincial governor of Szechwan, represented Chiang, and General Chou En-lai represented the Communists.

Aside from the question of whether the Kuomintang and the Communists, so long at odds with each other, can combine forces on a common political basis, the immediate issue that divides the two factions is which shall make the first concession. The Communists have asked for a general cessation of hostilities as a preliminary to any move toward unity. The government has proposed that the cessation be accompanied by immediate restoration of railway communications. Until unity is an actual accomplishment, the Communists are afraid to support any truce that might endanger the position of their army, and opening of the railroads would make it possible for National forces to move unhindered into Communist-garrisoned areas unless specific guarantees were given the latter.

While the Moscow communiqué acknowledged the "need for a unified and democratic China," the United States still gives its main support to the National government. This is indicated by the continuing assistance Chiang Kai-shek receives from United States military forces. The Russians have agreed to keep their forces in Manchuria until February 1 in order to hold positions of occupation until the Chinese can relieve them. The State Department on December 18 announced that Lt. General Albert Wedemeyer, commander of United States forces in China, was authorized to transport National government troops not only to ports but to inland cities of Manchuria. Wedemeyer's announcement on December 29 that he would need 4,000 more United States troops in China to move Chinese forces into Manchuria was in keeping with United States policy, as he is considered the judge of his own needs in accomplishing the mission assigned to him. The advance of National government troops into Jehol province at the end of December, however, darkened the outlook for unification. On January 3 the Communists, who claim their troops operated in Jehol during the war with Japan, protested the presence of national forces in that province.

The support by the United States of the National government's interests is shown also in the assignment of United States Marines to guard the rail line from Tientsin to Chinwengtao, as well as the Kailan Mining Administration along the line. But the National government has been made to realize that it cannot get unlimited aid from the United States for the pursuit of the civil war to a victorious end. The Moscow communiqué urged "broad participation by democratic elements in all branches of the national government and . . . a cessation of civil strife."

UNITY NOT ENOUGH. Since the United States has found it necessary to its own security to attempt to equalize foreign interests in China at intervals of less than twenty-five years, the Administration has begun the search for a sound program on which a unified China could develop lasting economic and political stability. Plans for industrialization, such as that proposed by the Foreign Economic Administration in 1944 at the request of Chiang Kai-shek, touch only part of the problem. China cannot be fully independent of dangerous unilateral foreign intervention until it is sturdy as well as united within.

BLAIR BOLLES